

# CENTRAL PARK CONSERVANCY

## CENTRAL PARK CONSERVANCY AT A GLANCE

The Central Park Conservancy was founded in 1980 by a group of dedicated civic and philanthropic leaders. They were determined to end Central Park's dramatic decline of the 1970s and restore it to its former splendor as America's first and foremost major urban public space, as envisioned by its 19th-century designers, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Today, the Conservancy's mission is to restore, manage, and preserve Central Park, in partnership with the public, for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

In 1998, the Conservancy and the City of New York signed a management agreement formalizing their then 18-year public-private partnership. The relationship was reaffirmed in 2006 when the agreement was renewed for an additional eight years. As the official manager of Central Park, the Conservancy is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance and operation of the Park. Presently, 80 percent of the Park's maintenance and operations staff is employed by the Conservancy, which provides 85 percent of Central Park's \$27 million annual budget through its fundraising and investment revenue. The City, in addition to the annual fee to the Conservancy for services it provides, funds lighting and maintenance of the Park drives and enforcement. The Department of Parks & Recreation retains policy control, has discretion over all user permits and events in the Park, and also provides 20 percent of the field staff.

Since its founding, the Conservancy has overseen the investment of \$450 million into Central Park, of which \$350 million was raised from private sources — individuals, corporations, and foundations — and \$100 million was contributed by the City. The Conservancy has also prescribed and carried out a restoration and management plan for the Park; managed the capital restoration of much of the Park's landscapes and facilities; created programs for volunteers and visitors; and set new standards of excellence in Park care. It has transformed Central Park into a model for urban parks worldwide. Helping other parks is a natural extension of the Conservancy's core mission. As such, it provides technical, management, and fundraising advice to park systems around the country and world.

In 1986, the Conservancy launched its first fundraising campaign, *Campaign for the Central Park Conservancy*, and restored Bethesda Terrace, Grand Army Plaza, Shakespeare Garden, and Cedar Hill, in the southern part of the Park. Capital projects in the early 1990s focused on the northern end of the Park, culminating in the restoration of the Harlem Meer. Through the *Wonder of New York Campaign* in the mid-1990s, the Conservancy restored the west side landscapes, the Great Lawn, and the North Meadow. Currently, the Conservancy is in its third campaign, *Campaign for Central Park*, which is funding the restoration of landscapes from the Metropolitan Museum of Art to the Harlem Meer and around the 22-acre Lake. This campaign will also provide long-term operating support.

Conservancy crews care for 250 acres of lawns, 26,000 trees, 150 acres of lakes and streams, and 130 acres of woodlands; install hundreds of thousands of plantings annually, including bulbs, shrubs, flowers, and trees; maintain 9,000 benches, 26 ballfields, and 21 playgrounds; preserve 55 sculptures and monuments and 36 bridges; remove graffiti within 24 hours; collect over 5 million pounds of trash a year; and provide horticultural support to City parks.

Conservancy public programs take advantage of the invaluable resources in Central Park, each year providing education, recreation, and volunteer programs that serve children, teenagers, adults, families, community organizations, and schools. In addition, the Conservancy provides visitor services at the five centers in the Park: Charles A. Dana Discovery Center, North Meadow Recreation Center, Belvedere Castle, Dairy Visitor Center & Gift Shop, and Chess & Checkers House.

For further information regarding Central Park and how to play a role in the Conservancy's mission, please visit our website, [www.centralparknyc.org](http://www.centralparknyc.org), or call 212-310-6600.





# CENTRAL PARK CONSERVANCY

25 YEARS OF CARING FOR THE PARK

## The OFFICIAL Website for CENTRAL PARK

[About CPC](#) [Support CPC](#) [Activities](#) [Virtual Park](#) [Park History](#) [Jobs/Volunteers](#) [Bring the Kids](#)

### Section Topics

[Management and Board of Trustees](#)
[History of the Conservancy](#)
[Conservancy at a Glance](#)
[1980-1988](#)
[1989-1992](#)
[1993-1997](#)
[1998-2002](#)
[2003-Present](#)
[Capital Projects](#)
[Public/Private Partnership](#)
[Annual Reports](#)
[25th Anniversary](#)
[Women's Committee](#)
[Public Relations](#)
[Filming and Photography in Central Park](#)
[Central Park in the Movies](#)
[Central Park Bibliography](#)
[FAQs](#)
[Park Drive Regulations](#)
[Map & Guide](#)
[Access Guides](#)
[Dogs in Central Park](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Central Park Perks](#)

### SITE SEARCH

[E-Mail this Page](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Site Index](#)
[HOME](#)
**Join  
Now**


## Conservancy at a Glance

The Central Park Conservancy is a private, not-for-profit organization founded in 1980 that manages Central Park under a contract with the [New York City Department of Parks & Recreation](#). Thanks to the generosity of many individuals, corporations, and foundations, the Conservancy has raised more than \$350 million to date and has transformed Central Park into a model for urban parks nationwide. Since its founding, the Conservancy has prescribed a management and restoration plan for the Park; funded major capital improvements; created programs for volunteers and visitors; and set new standards of excellence in Park care.



*Bethesda Terrace (before)*

With 25 million visitors each year to its 843 acres, Central Park is the most frequently visited urban park in the United States. The Conservancy provides 84% of Central Park's annual \$25 million operating budget and is responsible for all basic care of the Park. Approximately four out of every five Central Park employees are funded by the Conservancy. Conservancy crews aerate and seed lawns; rake leaves; prune and fertilize trees; plant shrubs and flowers; maintain ballfields and playgrounds; remove graffiti; conserve monuments, bridges, and buildings; and care for waterbodies and woodlands, controlling erosion, maintaining the drainage system, and protecting over 150 acres of lakes and streams from pollution, siltation, and algae.



*Bethesda Terrace (today)*

Since its founding, the Conservancy has spent over \$70 million to restore most of the major Park landscapes, and has built an endowment of approximately \$90 million. In 1993, a founding Conservancy Trustee offered a \$17 million challenge gift for major landscape restorations in Central Park, including the West Side, the Great Lawn, and the North Meadow. Both the Conservancy and the City matched this unprecedented gift within three years, and the Conservancy went on to raise an additional \$26.2 million toward operating support and endowment for the ongoing care of restored landscapes.

Conservancy public programs take advantage of the invaluable resources available in Central Park. Each year the Conservancy provides education programs focusing on environmental science, and Park history; recreation programs for youths, families, community organizations, and schools; and a volunteer program for youths and adults in horticulture and Park information services. In addition, the Conservancy organizes hundreds of free public programs throughout the year throughout the Park, primarily at the visitor centers operated by the Conservancy: The Charles A. Dana Discovery Center, Belvedere Castle, the Dairy, and the North Meadow Recreation Center.

The Conservancy also works with community and Park user groups to ensure that Central Park remains an enjoyable experience for all Park visitors. Groups like the Woodlands Advisory Board



and [Central Park PAWS](#) meet with the Conservancy regularly to develop a sense of stewardship among all Park users.

While enabling millions to enjoy the many wonders of Central Park, the Conservancy is firmly committed to maintaining and preserving New York City's treasured greensward and to educating the public to become better stewards of this irreplaceable urban treasure.

[Back to Top](#)

[\[About CPC\]](#) [\[Support CPC\]](#) [\[Activities\]](#) [\[Virtual Park\]](#) [\[Park History\]](#) [\[Volunteer/Jobs\]](#) [\[Kids\]](#) [\[Contact\]](#) [\[Search\]](#) [\[Home\]](#) [\[About Site\]](#)

Central Park Conservancy, 14 E. 60th St., New York, NY, 10022, 212-310-6600

Copyright © 2006, Central Park Conservancy. All rights reserved.

New York City Department of Parks & Recreation

This site powered by the Atlas Workcenter

